

FACT SHEET



St. Louis Plan to Control Smog

April 2000

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing to approve plans submitted by the states of Missouri and Illinois to attain the ozone (smog) standard in the St. Louis area. These plans outline actions that will help cut smog levels, making the air healthier to breathe for approximately 2.5 million people in St. Louis area. EPA also is proposing to extend the date by which the St. Louis area must attain the ozone standard to 2003. EPA supports the significant actions the states have proposed to achieve clean air and recent actions that they have taken to accomplish their goals.

ACTION ON STATE PLANS

The two states have submitted new plans to EPA showing that the St. Louis area will attain the ozone standard by 2003. The state plans include adoption of all local measures required under the Clean Air Act. Additionally, the plans will rely on statewide controls of nitrogen oxide (NO_x) emissions from major sources (primarily electric generating units). EPA is proposing to approve these plans provided the states do the following: (1) adopt and submit final regulations to control NO_x emissions from instate sources contributing to St. Louis's smog levels, and (2) make necessary enhancements to their computer modeling and emissions inventories to verify the plan's demonstration of attainment. Although EPA fully expects these conditions will be met, disapproval will result if the states fail to complete these actions.

EPA also proposes to extend the date for attainment from 1996 to 2003, if the states accomplish these steps. EPA has worked with the states to provide flexibility so that they can achieve their goals for clean air, while addressing the transport of harmful smog through the regional NO_x rule. By moving forward with this action, EPA believes it would not be necessary to reclassify the St. Louis area to a higher nonattainment level. EPA recognizes that certain areas have difficulty meeting clean air standards because some of the air pollution affecting them originates from upwind areas. EPA previously notified the states that the following criteria must be satisfied for an attainment date extension:

- an area must be identified as a downwind area affected by transport from certain upwind areas;
- an approvable attainment plan must be submitted showing how the area will attain the standard by a specified date;
- the area must adopt all local measures required under the current classification and any additional measures necessary to demonstrate attainment after accounting for reductions that will occur in upwind areas; and
- the area must implement all adopted measures as quickly as possible (no later than the date upwind reductions for attainment are achieved).

St. Louis is classified as a moderate ozone nonattainment area. This means that St. Louis is an area where urban smog can pose health concerns for citizens. The nonattainment area includes the counties of Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair in Illinois; and Franklin, Jefferson, St. Charles, and St. Louis Counties and the City of St. Louis in Missouri.

Under the Clean Air Act, states that have moderate ozone nonattainment areas must submit state implementation plans (SIPs) showing how they will achieve clean air to fulfill certain requirements of the Act. EPA is proposing approval of the plans submitted by Missouri and Illinois to address their air quality problems and is committed to working closely with the states to ensure that their clean air goals are realized.

Additionally, there is a pending court case which could affect EPA's final rulemaking on this action. The plaintiffs (the Sierra Club and the Missouri Coalition for the Environment) are asking the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C. to compel EPA to reclassify St. Louis as a "serious" rather than moderate ozone nonattainment area. The plaintiffs are also seeking to prevent EPA from applying its extension policy relating to the date for achieving attainment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Copies of relevant documents supporting this proposal are available at the following addresses:

Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Air Planning and Development Branch
901 North Fifth Street
Kansas City, KS 66101

Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
Air Programs Branch, Air and Radiation Division
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604

For further information, contact Jay Bortzer, EPA Region 5, Chicago, IL at (312) 886-1430 or Aaron Worstell, EPA Region 7, Kansas City, KS at (913) 551-7787.